

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION FINAL 2019



BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA COMMUNITY ADVICE CENTRE

RESILIENCE PROJECT ID: 10278855 2016-2019

REACHING COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND



Contents

<i>Executive Summary</i>	3
<i>Introduction: BHCAC Purpose and Resilience Project Structure</i>	7
<i>Evaluation method</i>	8
<i>Resilience Project Activities Delivered against original Aims and Objectives</i>	10
<i>Facts, Figures and Achievements over 3 Years (2016-2019)</i>	11
<i>Impact and Outcomes</i>	13
<i>Partner Contributions</i>	17
<i>Funding and Development</i>	18
<i>External Accreditations</i>	20
<i>Evaluation</i>	21
<i>Findings and Conclusions</i>	22
<i>Recommendations</i>	23
<i>Contact Information</i>	24
<i>Company Information</i>	24

APPENDIX 1 LIFE STORIES

APPENDIX 2 SAMPLE NEWSLETTERS

APPENDIX 3 RESILIENCE PROJECT CHANGE INDICATORS

Executive Summary

Introduction

Following a successful funding application to the National Lottery Community Fund, the Bosnia & Herzegovina Community Advice Centre (BHCAC) was able to progress plans for the proposed **Resilience Project**, to assist people, particularly older and people with disabilities, from the West Balkans living in London.

As a well-established community organisation in the London Borough of Brent, BHCAC has already confirmed strong connections with Partners both within Brent, throughout London and in regional areas and has developed skills and expertise in Support and Advice services, providing a person-centered approach and solution-based actions.

BHCAC has been able to respond to evidenced need, delivering a range of services designed in co-production with Beneficiaries, to promote independence, confidence, integration and well-being, while providing appropriate information on Health, Local services and Welfare Rights, to ensure increased access opportunities for Beneficiaries.

This Independent Evaluation has been commissioned as part of a commitment to continuous improvement and to underpin future planning and service provision.

Resilience Project Aims

The **RESILIENCE PROJECT** was awarded funding (£272,286) from the National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities Programme over a 3 year period and the Project aim has been to embed previous learnings, further increase Beneficiaries independence and resilience and improve community cohesion with a view to improving quality of life in the longer term

Key Target Outcomes:

- Active, resilient and more sustainable West Balkan communities, because members work together to overcome social isolation and improve community cohesion
- Older and disabled West Balkans will increase personal independence, resulting from improved access to services, communication and life skills development
- Older and disabled West Balkans will experience healthier and more productive lives, resulting from improved health, resilience, confidence and wellbeing

Outputs and Outcomes

	RESILIENCE PROJECT SERVICES DELIVERED	RESILIENCE PROJECT INITIAL TARGET OUTCOMES	
Life Skills Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money Management Workshops (with Let's Talk Money) • Benefit Appeals Training (with M2M Solicitors) • Digital Workshops (with Brent Start) • Volunteering Opportunities and Training in Community Work (with Advice UK & Brent Council) 	<p>Outcome 1</p> <p>Active resilient and more sustainable West Balkan communities, because members work together to overcome social isolation and improve community cohesion ✓</p>	<p>The Resilience Project</p> <p>3,481 people benefited from all project activities and of this number 1,239 people received more individual personalised support from Advocacy services delivered</p>
Increasing Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy & 1:1 Support • Advocacy Availability (32 Hours per week) • Information Newsletter Supplied quarterly in Bosnian-Serbo-Croat language 	<p>Outcome 2</p> <p>Older and disabled West Balkans will increase personal independence, resulting from improved access to services, communication and life skills development ✓</p>	<p>At Project end 80% of Beneficiaries reported increased independence, greater resilience in facing difficult issues and greater confidence in their ability to sustain well-being</p>
Health Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floristry Classes (with Brent Start) • Fitness Classes • Healthy Eating & Cooking Courses (with Brent Start) • Gym Sessions replaced (Year 3) with Walking activities • Health Awareness Newsletter 	<p>Outcome 3</p> <p>Older and disabled West Balkans will experience healthier and more productive lives, resulting from improved health, resilience, confidence and wellbeing ✓</p>	<p>Of the remaining 20%, 14% reported mobility issues as a single reason for their inability to sustain improvements without continuing support</p>
Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Club (Twice Weekly) • Social Events (2 per year) 		



Floristry Classes



Volunteers in Action



BHCAC Volunteer Award

Evaluation, Findings and Conclusions

Evaluation has been undertaken by:

informal feedback with Staff, Beneficiaries and Trustees, formal evaluation evidence from data collection, external evaluator (Quality standards, Investors in People) reports and comments from relevant external organisations (Partners in provision and Networks).

Key Evaluation Questions

What impact has the Project had on Beneficiaries?

Evidenced by consistent Feedback from Beneficiaries, Partners and Networks

What actions have been taken?

Evidenced by full delivery of services and achievement of targets set at Resilience Project planning

What indicates that the best methods of service delivery were used?

Evidenced by a person-centered, holistic assessment approach

Evidenced by research on local and national issues, legislation and analysis of trends and demands

Evidenced by effective deployment of Staff, Volunteer and Partner arrangements

Evidenced by monitored use of resources and budget compliance

Evidenced by consistently reviewed Feedback from Beneficiaries and Partners

Feedback indicates that services have been received as a very positive development in the field of practice-based Advice and support and as a major achievement, particularly considering the funding challenges faced by the organisation in service delivery. The significant success of the outreach development, working with the Brent Community Hub at Harlesden, has been received as a positive step towards further improving community cohesion and increasing social capital

In addition, BHCAC has successfully retained the Advice Quality mark and Investors in People Award through full compliance with quality standards.

BHCAC has successfully delivered Resilience Project Activities and Outcomes on time and on budget and has rigorously maintained a person-centered approach with Beneficiaries input at the heart of service provision.

- The Data collection framework is robust and the policy portfolio is updated with the 5 year Strategic Plan in place
- Matched Funding and no-cost Partner input has enabled BHCAC qualified and experienced Advice services to be extended to the wider Brent community and has established a platform for increasing integration, community cohesion and building social capital
- With increasing demand and the opportunity to contribute essential skills to the wider Brent community, the organisation would benefit significantly from additional funding for 6 hours per week which would ensure a minimum staffing structure of 1FTE Staff post and 1 Project Manager (28 hours)

Recommendations

1. To continue to develop capacity and capability in response to evidenced community need
2. To continue to extend service to the local Brent community which will further enhance opportunities for integration and community cohesion
3. To further develop the data collection database to integrate recording and simplify reporting
4. To explore the engagement of an IT Administrator (Volunteer or salaried)
5. To consider as a minimum, development of 1 Staff post (FTE) and retention of existing project management hours (28 per week)

Introduction: BHCAC Purpose and Resilience Project Structure

BHCAC has provided services to the West Balkan community in London for the past 22 years.

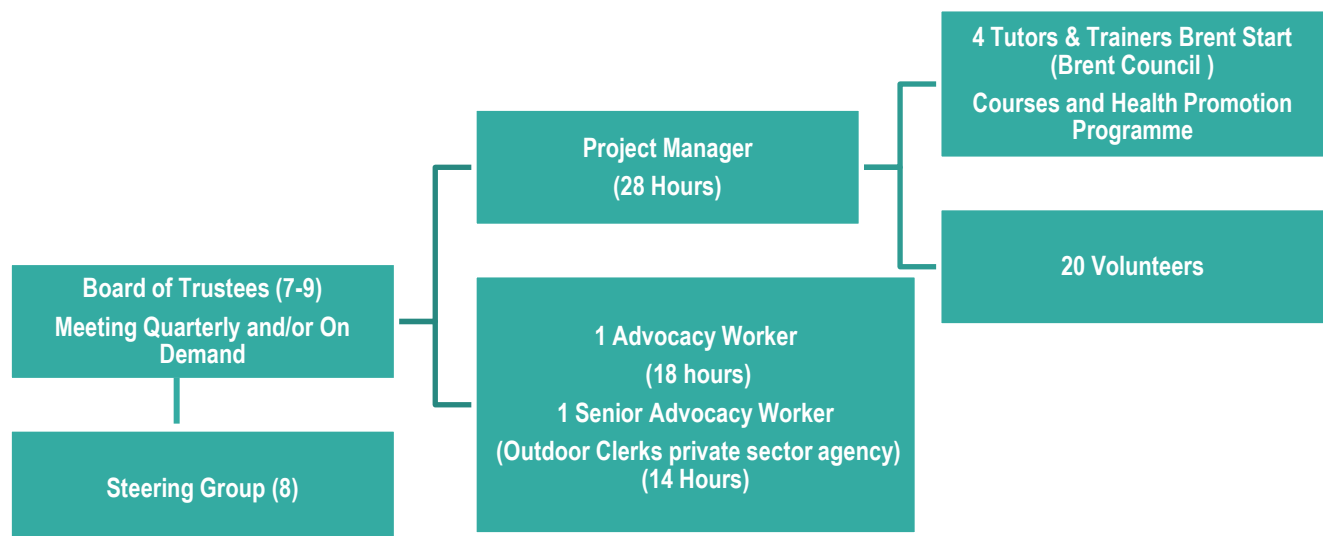
Identifying issues affecting people impacted by war experiences in former Yugoslavia, it was evident that language difficulties, mental and physical health issues and lack of understanding of systems in the UK, was inhibiting successful settlement and integration with the resident community. This group from the West Balkans was, and remains “hard to reach” and it was clear that structured outreach was required to engage those most at risk. It remains a priority to assess and understand needs, ensure the development of skills and confidence and provide appropriate support to achieve better integration and well-being.

BHCAC has always welcomed people from any community seeking assistance, however it remains the only organisation providing support in London for disadvantaged and marginalised people from the West Balkans.

BHCAC aims to:

- Provide targeted and preventive support, information, advice and advocacy services to avoid future crisis, to build resilience, increase independence and improve overall quality of life.
- Gather and disseminate information on issues affecting Beneficiaries to improve communication and improve access to other services.
- Provide trainings and workshops to help Beneficiaries navigate complex systems and address financial problems and digital exclusion.
- Provide classes, activities and therapeutic sessions to increase physical activity and develop coping strategies which will help Beneficiaries improve physical and mental health.
- Organise social and cultural events that reduce isolation and social exclusion and promote culture and positive interaction with the wider community.
- Provide opportunities and support for volunteering to equip Beneficiaries with skills in community work so they can “play their part” and fully contribute to society.

Resilience Project Structure



Evaluation Method

Evidence Review

Evidence reviewed confirms that BHCAC has achieved all outcomes at Project end (August 2019). Activities have been consistently reviewed and consultation with Beneficiaries rigorously maintained. This led to some alteration to schedules, in particular to gym sessions which were not supported, and to the delivery of activities according to Beneficiaries' preferred choices.

Methodology

Data was supplied, both qualitative and quantitative, against the Key Evaluation Questions. BHCAC has maintained the full range of policy and procedures which are observed as up to date. The Business Plan was reviewed during the term of the Project in consultation with Beneficiaries and all policies, procedures and systems were comprehensively updated. Beneficiaries' feedback has been provided, collected by a range of methods including observation, feedback questionnaires, informal and formal discussion, focus groups, scheduled meetings and casework comments. Beneficiaries have provided Life Stories for review and actively participate in all opportunities provided by the management team to express their views. Staff and Trustees provided an overview of progress, organisational demand, workload experience and updated systems. Outputs and Outcomes were reviewed in relation to overall Resilience Project Targets and the aims and objectives set out in the BHCAC Business Plan.

Data Collection

The AdvicePro case management system ensures all records are robust for Resilience Project activity. The system records relevant data on work with each beneficiary. This was regularly reviewed and issues identified were transferred to an excel format for analysis and identification of emerging trends

Beneficiaries' Feedback

Beneficiaries are fully consulted on all aspects of Project development and feedback is sought both on each Activity and whole project aims and objectives. The Steering Group meets regularly for consultation and focus groups are convened after each Activity term to seek input and ensure that Beneficiaries' views remain at the heart of service provision. Where adaptations are required these are implemented in line with Project change indicator aims.

Legislative Framework

As part of the Civil Society landscape, BHCAC activities clearly evidence a commitment to current priorities for Health and Social Care and a continuing commitment to ensuring high standards of service delivery.

Operating within Health, Social Care and Housing legislation, BHCAC activities are co-produced with and led by Beneficiaries themselves and reflect equality, prevention and a level of personalised service provision which confidently supplements statutory and universal services.

Key priorities for Health and Social Care include:

- Enabling more people to remain in their own home and retain or return to independent living
- Prevention of hospital admissions
- Improving access to services
- Enabling choice and control
- Ensuring Safeguarding is prioritised
- Working in partnership with relevant agency partners

The Care Act 2014 also emphasises the importance of prevention strategies to increase independence through preventive and supportive actions, including Advocacy, thereby reducing the need for of statutory services.

An awareness of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 ensures safe and supported decision making and empowerment for Beneficiaries.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995 updated 2005) and current Housing legislation provides a framework for BHCAC best practice.

BHCAC maintains an up to date knowledge of legislation, overall Health and Social Care priorities and Local trends information, to inform service delivery.

BHCAC ensured compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulations by implementing guidance issued by the *Charity Finance Group's General Data Protection Regulation: A Guide for Charities (January 2018)*.

Systems were reviewed to ensure effective data management and a new GDPR compliance policy document was prepared for inclusion in the BHCAC policy portfolio which is reviewed annually.

Safeguarding training was undertaken in partnership with Brent Council to inform both staff and Beneficiaries of current Safeguarding responsibilities.

Resilience Project Activities Delivered against original Aims and Objectives

Life Skills Development



Increasing Independence



Health Promotion



Social Development



Money Management Workshops (with Let's Talk Money)

Benefit Appeals Training (with M2M Solicitors)

Volunteering Opportunities and Training in Community Work (with Advice UK & Brent Council)

Digital Workshops (with Brent Start) (addition to original planning)

Advocacy & 1:1 Support

Advocacy Availability (32 Hours per week)

Information Newsletter Supplied quarterly in Bosnian-Serbo-Croat language

Floristry Classes (with Brent Start)

Fitness Classes

Healthy Eating & Cooking Classes (with Brent Start)

Gym Sessions replaced (Year 3) with Walking activities

Health Awareness Newsletter

Social Club (Twice Weekly)

Social Events (2 per year)

These Activities and Services benefit a range of Stakeholders:

- Beneficiaries (West Balkan and Local, Regional and National)
- Local Statutory services (across 6+ London Boroughs)
- Local Advice Services
- Local Health services (secondary)
- Local Civil Society services
- Refugee organisation partners
- Local Health services (primary)
- Bosnian Network organisations UK
- Private local agency partners (e.g. working with solicitors)

Facts, Figures and Achievements over 3 Years (2016-2019)

Governance and Management

- Trustees met twelve times
- Steering Group met 14 times (Beneficiaries involvement)
- Partner Group met 32 times
- Business Plan reviewed in consultation with Beneficiaries
- Policy portfolio reviewed
- GDPR compliance achieved
- Investors in People Award retained
- Advice Quality Standard Award (AQS) retained (2017 & 2019)
- Strength Assessment completed by Economic Change
- Young Volunteers recruitment achieved (7)
- Staff recruitment achieved (2)
- Staff meetings completed monthly
- Safeguarding training undertaken
- AGM each year (3)

Activities & Classes

- 5 Money Management Workshops delivered
- 2 Benefit Appeals Training sessions delivered (with M2M Community Solicitors)
- 23 Healthy Eating and Cooking Classes delivered
- 6 Digital Workshops delivered (with Brent Start) (Brent Council) (Autumn term)
- 18 Floristry Classes delivered (with Brent Start) (Brent Council) (Spring term)
- 80 Fitness Classes delivered
- 28 Gym sessions provided
- 3 Walking Activities delivered (Spring & Autumn term)
- Twice weekly Social Club delivered (283 sessions)
- 12 Social Events delivered

Communication

- Information Newsletter supplied quarterly in Bosnian-Serbo-Croat language (12) and English language (1) to 479 people

Advocacy and 1:1 Support

- 32 hours per week x 48 weeks x 3 years of Advocacy and 1:1 Support services delivered at general and senior level in English-Bosnian-Serbo-Croat languages (4623 Hours)
- Health Awareness Newsletter

Opportunities and Community Sustainability

- 20 Volunteering opportunities
- 4 Volunteer Training sessions in community work provided
- 5 Year Sustainability Strategy produced

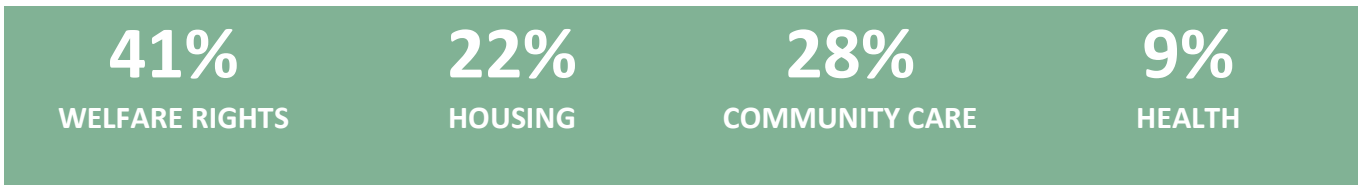
Volunteers Contribution

- 6 regular and 14 occasional Volunteers retained
- 20 Volunteers provided 4838 hours of Volunteering activity
- Economic value of volunteers to the Project assessed as £36,450 overall

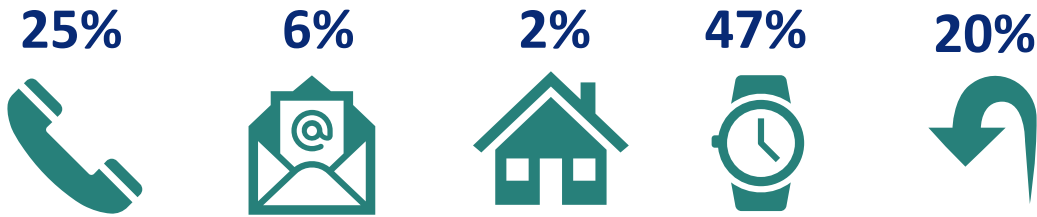


2016-2019 3,481 people benefited from all project activities and of this number 1,239 people received more individual personalised support from Advocacy services delivered

Support Reason



Contact Type



Telephone access is during office hours Monday to Friday

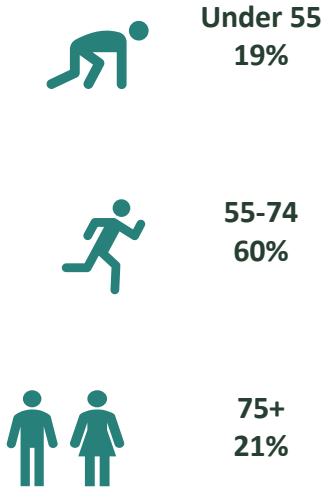
Emails are checked throughout the day and receive an immediate response

Sometimes it is important to undertake a home visit especially for those who have mobility issues or another limiting disability

The majority of contact is by appointment and allows for a professional service to be delivered with all resources available

Beneficiaries and other community residents sometimes take the opportunity to “drop in” seeking advice and support

Age Range



Project Targets

	Target	Achieved
Outcome 1 Active resilient and more sustainable West Balkan communities, because members work together to overcome social isolation and improve community cohesion	520 people	✓ 100%
Outcome 2 Older and disabled West Balkans will increase personal independence, resulting from improved access to services, communication and life skills development	1296 people	✓ 100%
Outcome 3 Older and disabled West Balkans will experience healthier and more productive lives, resulting from improved health, resilience, confidence and wellbeing	168 people	✓ 100%

Impact and Outcomes

Beneficiaries have supplied feedback on the impact of their interactions with the Project and an illustrative Life Story is outlined below:

Michael (Brent)

Michael is in his 40s, living in Harlesden, London Borough of Brent. In early December 2017, Michael became homeless having separated from his wife.

2 years prior to the relationship breakdown Michael suffered serious injuries in a motorbike accident resulting in permanent disability.

This meant he was unable to work and impacted his mental health such that over the course of the next two years the relationship between Michael and his wife broke down. Between December 2017 and April 2018 Michael stayed with friends and ultimately ended up rough sleeping in his car.

During the advisory meeting it became clear that Michael was now living in temporary accommodation, he did not have any money, was not in receipt of any Welfare Benefit payments, suffered from depression and had serious physical disability as well as Type 1 Diabetes.

Michael stated that he had been in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), but this stopped following a missed health assessment appointment in February 2018. Michael stated that he was still awaiting a new health assessment appointment.

Key Actions

Due to the danger posed by his health condition and the fact that Michael had already once before been in a diabetic coma for a week, the Sessional Advisor from BHCAC issued Michael with *Sufra NW London* food bank vouchers to address the immediate need for food.

The Sessional Advisor assisted Michael by helping him to complete his PIP renewal pack.

Michael and the Sessional Advisor contacted Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to make a claim for ESA and establish what had happened to his previous entitlement to ESA. The Sessional Advisor was advised by DWP that Michael had missed his health assessment appointment however there was nothing on the system to indicate that Michael's request for a new appointment was actioned. The Sessional Advisor sought Mandatory Reconsideration of the decision to suspend, since the missed appointment was due to non- receipt of the invitation letter because Michael was not living at home. He was in fact rough sleeping and vulnerable at the time.

Unable to achieve an advance on a new ESA due to the existing suspended old claim, Michael was assisted to make an online claim for Local Welfare Assistance from Brent Council.

Over the next two months; a homelessness application based on medical need was completed and a claim for Severe Disability Premium was submitted.

Key Outcomes

Michael was grateful to receive groceries from *Sufra NW London* food bank.

Michael was grateful to receive Local Welfare Assistance from Brent Council whose team was understanding and efficient in processing Michael's claim.

Michael was successful in having his Employment and Support Allowance reinstated and was awarded backdated payment from the day the ESA was stopped. He received a backdated payment of missed ESA in the sum of £3,544 plus £110.75 per week going forward.

Michael successfully renewed his entitlement to Personal Independence Payments, receiving a backdated payment of missed PIP in the sum of £3,745.60 plus £117.05 per week going forward.

Michael was successful in moving to a property on the ground floor which was more suitable to his medical needs.

Michael was also awarded Severe Disability Premium as lump sum of £2,057.60 in backdated payments and £64.30 per week going forward.

With advice and support from the Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre (BHCAC) Michael secured new accommodation and benefit entitlements, improving his future financial position, and has gained in total, £9,347.20 (to date).

Key Learning

The importance of better joint working between agencies

All agencies need to work together to effectively support vulnerable Adults

The lack of a comprehensive care plan covering all aspects of a person's needs, when they are both well and in relapse, can result in their vulnerability being increased due to inappropriate decisions being made and / or left to chance

When delivered appropriately, a person-centred care plan offers people the best opportunity to function to their full potential

This Life Story illustrates the value of an individual person-centered service

The Sessional Advisor was funded by a combination of the National Lottery Community Fund and Brent Advice Fund. Advisor training was funded through the "Building Capabilities" budget (the National Lottery Community Fund)

These funding combinations demonstrate the impact of initial National Lottery Community Fund input, on long-term outcomes

Additional Life Stories are available at APPENDIX 1

Resulting impacts include:

- Successful outcomes on resolution of issues
- Increased well-being
- Increased income maximisation
- Increased confidence
- Increased independence
- Increased social capital
- Improved community cohesion

Beneficiaries are fully consulted on all aspects of Project development and feedback is sought both on each Activity and whole project aims and objectives.

Focus Groups, formal and informal and discussion and maintenance of a qualitative therapeutic relationship, as well as an “open door” policy ensures all opportunities to “listen to” and assess the needs of Beneficiaries are maximised.

In addition, BHCAC maintains an up to date knowledge of legislation, overall Health and Social Care priorities and Local trends information, to inform service delivery.



During the Project period, Feedback Questionnaires were distributed to 479 individuals.

Further end Project comments were requested by a simple Questionnaire comprising 3 simple questions and trialed as a “pilot” to encourage maximum participation and review Beneficiaries’ participation response.

While considering measurement of “soft outcomes” BHCAC staff focus on increased participation in social groups; increased verbal communication; increased confidence in completing tasks; increased and demonstrated applied knowledge of welfare systems; increased confidence in questioning systems both internal and external, as well as the evidenced development of practical skills (e.g. budgeting; cooking; health and safety; Smart phone use)

Beneficiaries are offered an initial holistic assessment to identify needs which is re-visited throughout engagement; and full learning plans are developed for each Beneficiary identifying aims and goals which they particularly want to achieve.

Comments include:

"The Advocacy service is the most important ... the older people without the Advocacy would not be able to do anything"

Thank you
So So much!
you are the
ONLY person
who helped me
and gave me
the advice I needed.
again thank you
and God bless
X X you!!



"I enjoy Fitness class. I feel energised and it keeps me mobile"



"I came to cooking classes after my wife died. It was a great help to me and I could look after myself at home"



Dear Emina
The words cannot explain what you have done for us. My daughters and I were hopeless and if you wouldn't help us we would be even homeless. I have been suffering a lot behind the doors that people used to close in front of me ...
Three of us want to say "Thank you" for everything.
Thank you for not letting us without house.
Thank you for all the hope that you bring back to us.
We will pray for your happiness always
May God be with you!



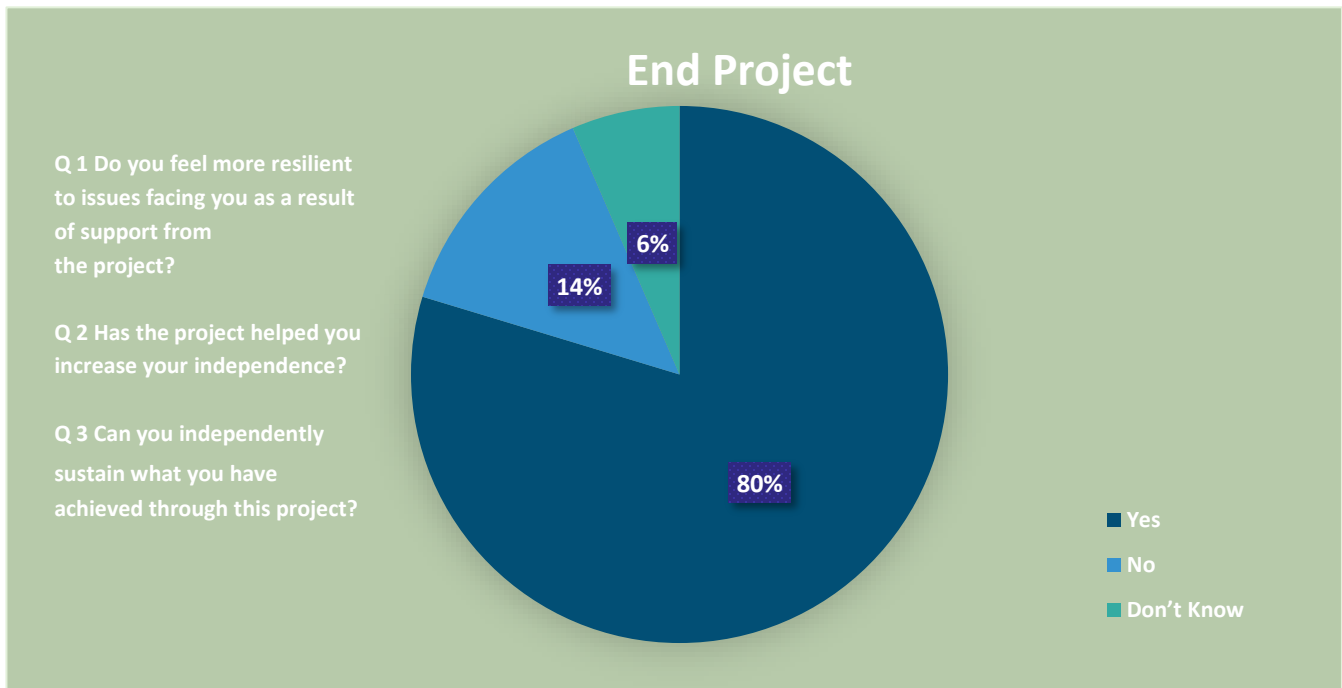
The quarterly Newsletter keeps Beneficiaries informed and connected (Sample Appendix 2)

NB All Beneficiaries provided consent to information sharing



Visit to SUFRA Food Bank

Sample Feedback Questionnaire



Beneficiaries clearly understand the value of feedback for shaping services and identifying needs. BHCAC analysis collates all data collected to ensure performance indicators are on track and targets and outcomes are successfully achieved.

Full discussion with Beneficiaries on services provided and service delivery processes maintains a person-centered approach

This simple Questionnaire was provided to offer a “light touch” opportunity to express views on the Project delivery and experience overall.

- **Don't Know** respondents particularly noted language issues on the form
- **No** respondents while confirming progress with skills, learning and confidence, were clearly concerned with individual sustainability without continuing support. Those respondents noted health and mobility needs as factors requiring further assistance and may have been influenced by the fact that the Project funding was coming to an end.
- **Yes** respondents highlighted improvements in skills confidence and independence and often noted “thanks” to Staff on the form
- **80%** responded “yes” to all 3 questions

The importance of analysis of data to inform actions and target setting cannot be overstated and can contribute to and complement day to day perceptions and anecdotal evidence.

Partner Contributions

OutdoorClerks



OutdoorClerks is a legal support service providing in-house specialist support with Benefit Appeals cases and a senior advocacy service for complex issues (Senior Advocacy Worker and Sessional Welfare Benefits Advisor)

Brent Start provides essential sessional staff to support training and learning opportunities for Beneficiaries and maintains qualified Tutor support for Healthy Eating and Cooking Classes, Floristry and Digital Classes.

This input ensures access to adult education courses for a “hard to reach” community

M2M Community Solicitors offers support to Beneficiaries on Welfare Rights issues and provides tailored in-house Benefit Appeals training.

This input develops knowledge and skills, enabling Beneficiaries to act independently

2 Trainings provided during the project term

Let's Talk Money provides financial education workshops and works jointly with **Resilience Project staff**.

This joint input has provided Beneficiaries with the knowledge and tools to better manage their limited resources.

5 Money Management Workshops provided during the project term.

Sufra NW London Food Bank provides essential supplies for Beneficiaries in crisis and financial hardship.

BHCAC acts as an official Referrer partner

NETWORKS



BHCAC is a member of **BCAN** which is the local Brent network for Advice Services. This network provides support and training, opportunities for shared learning and updates on Advice guidance and service delivery.

Advice UK is a trusted and supportive partner in sharing learning and training opportunities for BHCAC Advice staff. BHCAC is a member and commissions training on business planning, strategy and sustainability matters for Trustees, Staff and Volunteers. 2 Trainings provided during the project term.

Bosnia and Herzegovina UK Network is based in Birmingham and provides advice and support services to people from the West Balkans living in the West Midlands. BHCAC and Bosnia and Herzegovina UK Network are in close communication sharing best practice and learning, for mutual benefit.

Funding and Development

2016-2019



Resilience Project Funding for 3 years (2016-2019) from the **National Lottery Reaching Communities Programme** has underpinned and supported all Resilience Project outputs and has enabled BHCAC to

attract match funding and non-cost contributions from other organisations, enabling project development, sustainability and the extension of services to the wider community in Brent



Income Generation



AWARDS FOR ALL

Match funding from Brent Advice Fund (Brent Council) supported the Resilience Project in year 1, and provided Outreach Welfare Advice and Support for the wider local community for 2 years at Brent Hubs (Harlesden)

Brent Council funding through Brent Advice Partnership led by Citizens Advice Brent and CVS Brent enabled Resilience Project extension and BHCAC participation at Brent Hubs.



Working closely with Brent Council and local organisations at Brent Hubs provides a joint response to the

local community as part of the **Brent Borough Plan (2019-2023)** which seeks to build resilient communities and to address the needs of residents earlier. **BHCAC participation and service delivery at Brent Hubs (Harlesden) is a direct contribution to delivery of this plan** and the initiative has enabled BHCAC to extend unique tailored Advice services and support to the wider community on 2 days per week. This will be further extended to 3 days per week from September 2019 with a new Willesden site addition in 2019.

This initiative enabled BHCAC to act as “first responders” in mitigating the impact of the Universal Credit rollout in the Brent area.

Match funding from City Bridge Trust provided a Pan-London support service for 1.5 years for Beneficiaries aged 75+

Activities aimed to reduce isolation and improve self-confidence and interaction with others.

Safeguarding training provided a focus on recognition of abuse, referral systems and access paths.

Activities:

Advocacy & Advice in Bosnian-Serbo-Croat language
Group “talking”
Therapy Monthly
Accompanied support to access services
Social and educational activities 3 x Year

All Beneficiaries are aware of BHCAC income generation policy which covers any requested service not supported by existing individual funding streams

Match funding from the Edward Harvist Trust Fund (Brent) and National Lottery Awards For All enabled capital investment in BHCAC premises providing refurbishment to ensure compliance with Health and Safety requirements and improve facilities for Beneficiaries, particularly those with mobility issues

Additional Funding Applications Submitted

BHCAC continuously seeks additional and alternative funding options to underpin service delivery, further develop capacity and support organisational development. During the 3 year Resilience Project period, BHCAC submitted a total of 19 funding applications including:

Unsuccessful	Decision Awaited
Henry Smith Charity (January 2019)	Voluntary Sector Initiative Fund (August 2019)
Lloyds Bank Foundation (February 2019)	People's Postcode Trust (August 2019)
Tudor Trust (May 2019)	Masonic Charitable Foundation (August 2019)
London Community Foundation (May 2017)	Proposal National Lottery Community Fund (April 2019)

FUNDING RESULTS in addition to the National Lottery Community Fund

CITY BRIDGE TRUST	1 Award	£116,800
AWARDS FOR ALL	2 Awards	£19,997
EDWARD HARVIST TRUST FUND	3 Awards	£14,900
BRENT ADVICE FUND (BRENT COUNCIL)	5 Awards	£56,337
BHCAC INCOME GENERATION		£5,951
	Total	£213,985

The additional funding achieved is calculated at **79%** of the original National Lottery Community Fund award (£272,286).

In addition, the monetised contribution of Volunteers to the Resilience Project over 3 years (4838 Hours) equates to a financial sum of **£36,450**

Including this figure, would total **£250,435** and raise the additional funding percentage achieved to **92%** of the original National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities Programme award.

These results confirm the value of the National Lottery Community Fund awards to smaller organisations, enabling sustainable development and a “wider reach” of services to communities.

External Accreditations

BHCAC has successfully retained major quality marks following rigorous assessment and the following comments reflect external validation of practice standards:

Comments from Advice Quality Standard Assessment Report

“There are an impressive number of good practices across every heading A-G of the AQS Standard (an achievement in itself), where the organisation has exceeded the requirements of the AQSv2 to a significant extent. This is a most encouraging sign as the organisation, like so many in the third sector continues to navigate its way through funding challenges on the one hand and an increase in demand for its services on the other. “

Neil Huxtable AQS Assessor 9 July 2019

Comments from Investors in People Assessment Report

“Ensuring that people have the skills they need to support the needs of service users is a key organisational strategy and this means that there are constant formal and informal discussions about development needs and how these should be addressed. People find the training they have to be of excellent quality and the training on universal credit has helped improve the quality of support they have been able to provide to service users.”

Belinda Tankel IIP Assessor 8 June 2018

Comments from Brent Hub

“In support of Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre application to Brent Advice Fund. Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre (BHCAC) have been actively involved in the Brent Community Hubs delivering first class advice to local residents of Harlesden for 18 months. They are an invaluable member of the Hub providing dedicated advice and support in a range of welfare related queries. They have committed to the Brent Hubs programme and are the only organisation currently offering their services two days a week at Harlesden. The Brent Hubs programme is being rolled out across a number of locations in the Borough and BHCAC have expressed a strong interest in offering their services out of the Willesden Hub due to be open Autumn 2019. We support BHCAC funding applications as their presence at the Hubs adds value to the services being provided.”

Mo Jama Brent Hubs Manager May 2019



Evaluation

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

WHAT IMPACT HAS THE PROJECT HAD ON BENEFICIARIES?

Monitoring and feedback systems evidence that the delivery of the Resilience Project has had a profound impact on the lives of Beneficiaries.

All support and activities delivered, demonstrated a clear focus on independence, well-being and the reduction of isolation as well as providing relevant and consistent information and advice which enables Beneficiaries to make informed choices on their whole life management.

In addition, evidence indicates an increase in physical and mental health overall and increased capacity both to access wider services and participate in the local community.

WHAT ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN?

Establishment of a clear Strategic Plan co-produced with Beneficiaries, has provided a framework for successful delivery of services to match the needs identified within the West Balkan and wider local community.

Regular consultation opportunities and an open approach to feedback has ensured Beneficiaries participation in all stages of planning activity. The Steering Group with representatives for each activity elected by Beneficiaries themselves and a full Activity Plan, has provided opportunities for regular review.

The Board of Trustees has reviewed all planning at quarterly intervals.

Partnerships have been maintained and developed resulting in increased training, funding and the provision of partner staff to assist activity delivery and maximise the impact of and outcomes from core funding streams.

Costs and Budget is tracked at Board level and regular risk assessment ensures any business risks are identified and robustly addressed.

WHAT INDICATES THAT THE BEST METHODS OF SERVICE DELIVERY WERE USED?

- Feedback from Beneficiaries
 - Shared learning with professional partners
 - Retention of an overview of priorities and trends in Health; Social Care; Welfare Rights and Housing
 - Local area service reviews and experience of local services access and eligibility methods
 - Systems in place for continuous review
 - Cost efficiency
-

Findings and Conclusions

- ✓ All Policy and Planning was noted as up to date
- ✓ The Resilience Project was delivered within budget and timescales
- ✓ Aims and Objectives were observed throughout planning and service delivery
- ✓ “Soft Outcomes” were measured and recorded appropriately through Beneficiaries’ Feedback provided verbally, in Feedback Questionnaires, focus groups and observed in interactions and noted behaviours
- ✓ “Hard Outcomes” were appropriately recorded and updated on the database formats utilised
- ✓ Appraisal and staff meeting notes and communications were appropriately recorded

BHCAC has successfully achieved and in some cases exceeded, targets set at Resilience Project start.

The Resilience Project has fully involved Beneficiaries in maintaining direction and provided a positive environment for the development of ideas, skills and resilience, while maintaining key performance indicators during progress and moving forward.

Networks and outreach have been further developed to include the wider Brent Community and proved very successful in engaging and supporting residents of Brent through participation in the Brent Hub system for Advice which enabled even more opportunities for integration between Beneficiaries from the West Balkans and the wider Brent community.

BHCAC success and expertise has been recognised in the attraction of match funding which has enabled capacity building and the opportunity to further develop staff skills through a consistent approach to training and reflective practice.

Beneficiaries clearly demonstrate benefit from interaction with the organisation and this has been observed and recorded across the data collection system. In addition, Beneficiaries Life Stories clearly indicate the benefit “felt” and evidence “soft outcomes” from activities which underpin and promote positivity and learning, enhance skills and self-esteem and build social capital.

BHCAC evidences a person-centered service in action and provides a “space” where people are respected and valued enabling learning at every level and supporting growth and confidence which contributes to overall well-being.

BHCAC has consistently pursued all opportunities for partnership in service delivery and succeeded in attracting funding solutions to underpin development plans.

BHCAC has demonstrated the benefit of small, agile organisations as “first responders” anticipating the impact of the Universal Credit system rollout in Brent and preparing staff and Beneficiaries through training and discussion while simultaneously developing processes to ensure service delivery was responsive to emerging need.

BHCAC operates with 1.6 (FTE) (60 hours per week) paid staff. Adding Volunteer hours (7 hours per week), this equates to a **maximum staff availability of 1.8 (FTE)**. This is a risk to long term sustainability and the organisation would benefit significantly from additional funding for 6 hours per week which would ensure a minimum staffing structure of 1FTE Staff post and 1 Project Manager (28 hours)

Recommendations

1. To continue to develop capacity and capability in response to evidenced community need
2. To continue to extend service to the local community which will further enhance opportunities for integration and community cohesion
3. To further develop the data collection database to integrate recording and simplify reporting
4. To explore the potential engagement of an IT Administrator (Volunteer or salaried)
5. To consider as a minimum, development of 1 Staff post (FTE) and retention of existing project management hours (28 per week)

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Company Information

Moylen Associates

Social Care Consultancy
Company Number: SC295331

With thanks to BHCAC Staff, Beneficiaries, Trustees and External Contributors

Leo's Story

updated August 2019

Project name: Resilience Project
Project ID: 10278855
Project activities:
Advocacy and 1:1 Support
Money Management Workshops
Walking Activities

Future Crises Prevented, Increased Independence, Developed Resilience and Relationships

Background

Leo is a 57year old gentleman living alone in the London Borough of Brent. Leo has significant mobility difficulties, a heart condition, learning difficulties and asthma. As a result of his physical conditions Leo is unable to walk more than 15 yards at a time.

Leo approached BHCAC for assistance to help him resolve his housing situation. The property he was living in was not suitable to his medical needs as it was almost a mile away from any amenities with the nearest bus stop over 150 yards away and reported that for the last seven years he has slept in his living room because there is significant damp in his bedroom. In addition, Leo stated that as he is dyslexic, he finds it difficult to deal with issues and correspondence and that the whole situation is causing him significant stress, making his mental health worse.

Actions

Leo was assisted and supported by BHCAC over a period of six months. Following an initial meeting with Leo, the BHCAC Advocacy Worker wrote to Leo's GP requesting medical evidence of his health conditions. On receipt of the response a housing transfer form based on medical need, was completed and submitted to Leo's landlord, a housing association. Following a number of telephone calls, and two months later, Leo was informed that the housing association did not receive his housing transfer application (the reason for this was unclear). A new application was submitted together with proof of the original application postage. Shortly after, Leo received a letter from his housing association stating that his application was refused.

In light of the overwhelming medical evidence, a letter of complaint with reasons why Leo disagreed with the housing association decision was submitted and the case was transferred to BHCAC Senior Advocacy Worker (in house Project Partner Outdoor Clerks) who liaised with the housing association over the next couple of weeks.

It was finally accepted that Leo has a medical need and that his current accommodation is no longer suitable. As a result, Leo was given a direct offer of new accommodation more suitable to his medical need.

Results

Six months after initially approaching BHCAC for assistance Leo was offered a ground floor flat close to local amenities which he gladly accepted. Leo was further assisted by the Senior Advocacy Worker to register with new utility providers, to close utility accounts at the old property and to inform his GP, optician, dentist, bank and the Department of Work and Pensions, of his new address.

Outcome

As a direct result of BHCAC intervention Leo has prolonged and increased personal independence and secured improved access to other services. Leo reports feeling happier and reduced stress and worry. Undoubtedly the new property will prevent any future health crisis which may have occurred had he remained at his previous property.

Following successful completion of all actions, Leo was encouraged to take part in BHCAC activities such as 'Money Management Workshops' to encourage better management of his finances and to attend some of our events in order to reduce isolation. We are pleased to report that Leo has taken up our offer on both, and most recently has attended a visit to Sufra NW London-Food bank and St. Raphael's Edible Garden which encouraged him to plant some new flowers in his own garden. Leo has reported that as a direct result of taking part in BHCAC activities he has made new friends, is able to better manage his bills and feels less isolated.

Mary's Story

Increased Independence and Developed Resilience

Background

Mary is an older non-English speaking lady with disabilities. Mary is a British citizen, originally from the West Balkans. Recently, she lost her daughter to cancer and currently lives in a Council property with her husband John, who also has disabilities. Mary suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and depression due to traumatic experiences during the Bosnian war. Mary rarely leaves her house and is quite isolated.

Mary approached BHCAC Advocacy Worker for assistance due to an unresolved leak within the home property and the severe consequences of the leak (no electricity in half of the flat, faulty cooker, continuous leak). Due to many setbacks in the past the couple felt very resentful and lost confidence that the repair problem would ever be resolved. While involved in resolving the housing repair problems, the Advocacy Worker became aware of additional financial difficulties which Mary and her husband John faced.

Actions

The Advocacy Worker contacted the Council on behalf of Mary and John and made a formal complaint regarding the lengthy response time with regard to the outstanding repair resolution, requesting that the matter be resolved as soon as possible due to the couple's disability and older age.

After several interventions from the Advocacy Worker, the Council carried out an inspection and contractors visited the flat above and repaired the on-going the leak. In addition, Council's contractors also repaired the electric fault electricity and other damages which had resulted in the flat. Finally, the kitchen was painted and decorated. The Advocacy Worker also contacted the relevant insurance company and completed the content insurance claim form for the cooker which was damaged beyond repair during the continuous leak. The insurance company accepted the claim and replaced the cooker.

During the housing repair process, the Advocacy Worker completed a full benefit check for the couple and identified that Mary could be entitled to Attendance Allowance. The Advocacy Worker contacted the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and requested an application form for Attendance Allowance. Once the application paperwork was received by Mary, the Advocacy Worker made a home visit and assisted in completing the form which was then sent to DWP.

As a result, Mary received higher rate of Attendance Allowance in the amount of £334.90 and £85.60 per week going forward for help with personal care, for an indefinite period.

Results

As a result of the intervention of an Advocacy Worker who speaks Mary's language, access to the service became possible and a difficult and slow process of repair was progressed to a successful conclusion. This resulted in a significant reduction of stress for both Mary and John and prevention of possible further health complications.

Because the whole situation was explained to Mary in her language, she had a better understanding of the issue and the way Council's contractors operate which reduced her resentment and bad feelings, making her feel better generally.

The stress was further reduced by Mary and John's satisfaction with the increased income which was a result of the Attendance Allowance application which the Advocacy Worker initiated. Mary's financial circumstances changed, making it possible for her to access essential extra support when needed.

Outcome

Before the Advocacy Worker's intervention, Mary felt hopeless. This intervention resulted in a situation where the Mary is now more confident and reassured that she can take steps to resolve her problems in the future. Mary reported increased independence and developed resilience and was very thankful to the Advocacy Worker and satisfied with the Project Advocacy service delivered.

Ray's Story

Future Crises Prevented and Increased Independence

Background

Ray is in his mid-50s and a British citizen originating from the West Balkans. As a survivor of war in Bosnia, Ray has been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and severe depressions. Due to Ray's state of mental health he has been unable to integrate into wider society fully. He is single, lives on his own, does not speak English and relies on day-to-day support from his elderly mother and his older sister. Ray originally approached BHCAC in March 2018 having received Notice to Quit from his landlord. The Senior Advocacy Worker was allocated the case due to the nature and multiple issues Ray faced.

Following a meeting with Ray it was established that he was in significant rent arrears due to his Housing Benefit being stopped following an ending of entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Ray stated that he attended a Capability for Work Health Assessment requested by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) after which he received a letter from DWP informing him that he was no longer entitled to ESA.

During the course of the meeting it was established that Ray did not understand the content of the letter and had only realised there was something wrong when he did not receive his ESA payment. When Ray contacted DWP he was unable to pass the security check due to the language barrier and as a result he had to seek help from others. Ray approached BHCAC when he was under an overwhelming amount of stress. He was in rent arrears, receiving constant and continues calls from his landlord and he was in financial hardship not having received any income for over six weeks.

Actions

The Senior Advocacy Worker assisted Ray in requesting Mandatory Reconsideration of the DWP decision, which DWP decided to uphold, and which is currently awaiting a hearing before an independent Tribunal.

In terms of addressing Ray's immediate need, the Senior Advocacy Worker assisted Ray to apply for Universal Credit and obtained an interim advice payment of the same.

The Senior Advocacy Worker also liaised with Ray's landlord informing of the situation with regard to Ray and explained that he was taking necessary steps to resolve the issue of rent arrears and re-instatement of his rent benefit entitlement.

The Senior Advocacy Worker also informed the landlord that the telephone calls Ray was receiving were causing him significant distress and that he now requested all communication in written form in order to reduce his stress levels and to ensure that someone would be able to translate any letters sent to him to enable him to fully understand any written communications.

Ray also requested that his rent element of the Universal Credit payment would be paid directly to his landlord since he was not able to manage the financial budget on his own, due to his mental health difficulties.

In order to increase Ray's personal independence and reduce reliance on support from his mother, the Senior Advocacy Worker advised and assisted Ray in applying for Personal Independence Payment.

Results

Ray is now in receipt of regular Universal Credit payment which also covers his rent. He has had a further Capability for Work Health Assessment in which the DWP found him to have limited capability for work.

Ray's claim for Personal Independent Payment was successful and he received £951.51 in his account and was awarded standard rate of £55.65 a week for help with daily living needs and standard rate of £22.00 a week for help with mobility needs until 24 May 2021.

Outcome

Ray reports reduced stress and a greater sense of personal independence. He feels he has received help when he needed it most and believes that this intervention has helped to prevent a serious future crisis.

APPENDIX 2 SAMPLE NEWSLETTERS
(Produced in English-Bosnian-Serbo-Croat language)

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA COMMUNITY ADVICE CENTRE (BHCAC)

NEWS

JULY 2019

ISSUE 32



“When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice.”

— Indian Proverb

Walking Activity to Harlesden & Visit to Harlesden Community Hub

On the 15th of May 2019 BHCAC beneficiaries embarked on a walking excursion to Harlesden, to visit the Harlesden Community Hub located in Harlesden Library, 49A Craven Park Road NW10 8SE .

On our arrival, our beneficiaries received a warm welcome from Ms. Chanita Lawrence the Harlesden Community Hub Co-ordinator, who gave us a wonderful tour of the Harlesden Library, where our beneficiaries were able to officially meet our partners and see the space where our Advisers work.

BHCAC works closely in partnership with other community organisations and Brent Council to assist the local community. Over the course of the last financial year 2018/19 our Advisers assisted 610 local people at Harlesden Community Hub alone, where we provided them with information, advice, guidance and practical support on Welfare Benefit Rights. Should you wish to access our outreach service please feel free to do so as our advisers are there every Wednesday and Thursday between 10am and 5pm.

Overall our beneficiaries thoroughly enjoyed their tour of the library as well as a well-deserved coffee break in the sun afterwards.



In this Issue:

Walking Activity to Harlesden Community Hub 1

Walking Activity - visit to Sufra Food Bank 2

Health Watch 3

Welfare Benefits News & Updates 3

New Advocacy Worker Selma 4

Goodbye Eminza 4

Membership 2019 4

RENOVIRANE PROSTORIJE CENTARA

Zahvaljujući sredstvima koje je menadžment BHCAC-a obezbjedio od organizacija Award for All i fonda općine Brent - Edward Harvist Trust Fund renovirane su prostorije našega centra. U cijelom centru postavljen nov kvalitetan pod. Cijeli prostor u centru sada se nalazi na jednakom nivou što također povećava sigurnost kretanja u centru, kog posjećuje veliki broj starijih osoba. Kao krajnja faza dosadašnjeg projekta postavljena je i nova kuhinja te će se naši volonteri, članovi i zaposleni radnici zbilja nalaziti u prijatnom ambijentu. Naš predsjednik Zaim Pašić i sekretar Fejzo Jahaj su rasklopili staru kuhinju što je omogućilo majstorima iz kompanije Fox Design and Construct Ltd. da brže i jeftinije završe svoj dio posla. Naše prostorije su ogledalo organizacije i mi smo uvijek zavisno od naših mogućnosti održavali ih čistim i urednim. Sa ovom najnovijim unapređenjima naš centar prezentira našu organizaciju u najboljem svjetlu. Nadati se da i drugi aspekti izgleda naše organizacije kao što su njena otvorenost, stručnost i ljubaznost osoblja kao i predanost i poštovanost naših članova i volontera ostavljaju jednako lijepu sliku našeg centra u očima svih onih koji ga posjete.

Ako se svako od nas kreće prema naprijed zajedno, uspjeh će voditi brigu sam o sebi
(Henry Ford)

U OVOM IZDANJU:

<i>Renovirane prostorije BHCAC-a</i>	1
<i>Srebrenica memorijal</i>	2
<i>Kurs za univerzalni kredit</i>	2
<i>Radionica za upravljanje novcem</i>	2
<i>Pomoć i podrška njegovateljima</i>	3
<i>Razgovori u grupi</i>	4
<i>Članarina—izmjene u rokovima uplata</i>	4

APPENDIX 3 RESILIENCE PROJECT Change Indicators 2016-2019

Outcome1

Active, resilient and more sustainable West Balkan communities, because members work together to overcome social isolation and improve community cohesion

Change Indicator 1	Target Beneficiaries	Project end Beneficiaries	% Achieved
Beneficiaries will achieve development of skills, improved self-esteem and confidence and develop management skills for community work and participation in organisational strategic planning	20	18	90
Change Indicator 2 Beneficiaries who are house dependent will experience better support to access opportunities for social development and become more active in the wider community	75	94	125
Change Indicator 3 Beneficiaries will achieve increased involvement in social activities and increased engagement with the wider community resulting in reduced isolation and social exclusion	520	520	100

Outcome 2

Older and disabled West Balkans will increase personal independence, resulting from improved access to services, communication and life skills development

Change Indicator 1	Target Beneficiaries	Project end Beneficiaries	% Achieved
Beneficiaries will achieve increased knowledge of relevant issues and empowered to avoid future crises through the provision of information and support to develop creative solutions	1200	1239	103
Change Indicator 2 Beneficiaries will achieve development of life skills and increase the ability to apply this knowledge in everyday life situations	96	110	115
Change Indicator 3 Beneficiaries will achieve improved communication skills and increased access to external services resulting in reduced stress and anxiety	1296	1307	101

Outcome 3

Older and disabled West Balkans will experience healthier and more productive lives, resulting from improved health, resilience, confidence and wellbeing

Change Indicator 1	Target Beneficiaries	Project end Beneficiaries	% Achieved
Beneficiaries will achieve increased access to sports facilities resulting in increased physical health and better engagement with the wider community	144	136	94
Change Indicator 2 Beneficiaries will achieve better control of their health and wellbeing	24	65	271
Change Indicator 3 Beneficiaries will experience increased physical activity and improved physical and mental health	168	173	103